

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

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May 20, 2003

FROM: KEN A. MILLER, Director
Department of Public Works - Regional Parks Division

SUBJECT: CAMP BLUFF LAKE

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Approve concept of the Regional Parks Division operating Camp Bluff Lake, located near the City of Big Bear on a trial basis for the 2003 summer season (June 1, 2003 – October 31, 2003).
2. Direct staff to negotiate an agreement with The Wildlands Conservancy, owner of Camp Bluff Lake, for the operation of the camp from June 1, 2003 through October 31, 2003.
3. Direct staff to provide report and recommendations to the Board by November 15, 2003, regarding the future County operation of the camp.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: In 2000, The Wildlands Conservancy (The Conservancy) purchased Camp Bluff Lake from the Orange County YMCA and has operated the camp for the past two years. In September of 2002 the Regional Parks Division was approached by The Conservancy with an offer to take over the operations of the facility. Since that time, Regional Parks has analyzed the proposal and determined that the operation can be financially self-sustaining and an integral part of the Regional Park System. At this time there is no youth camp facility in the County of San Bernardino that is owned by the County and operated with a specific focus on the disadvantaged youth of this County.

Camp Bluff Lake is located in the San Bernardino Mountains close to the City of Big Bear. Surrounded by the National Forest, the 120-acre camp sits 7,600 feet above the valley floor. The camp facility has been completely renovated by The Conservancy including a new, state-of-the-art dining facility which is expected to be completed by late fall 2003. With 15 cabins housing 12 residents each this camp will be able to accommodate, at full capacity, an estimated 1,980 campers per 11-week season.

To become familiar with the facility and operational requirements Regional Parks is proposing to operate this facility in the summer of 2003 for approximately one month. The shortened season of operation is also due to the late start for recruiting organizations with camping programs, thus, it is unclear how much staff will be required for this coming season. Also limiting the season this summer is the completion of the

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Dining Facility. It is anticipated that The Conservancy will have the Dining Facility completed by the fall of 2003; therefore specific arrangements will have to be made for providing meals during the 2003 summer season. With these limitations Regional Parks is expecting to administer the facility with existing Parks staff and will need to hire temporary staff to operate the camp and implement the camp programs, with possible operational assistance from The Conservancy. The estimated cost of operating the camp during 2003, for approximately four weeks is \$99,444 as shown on the attached proposed budget. The estimated cost will change depending on how many campers actually attend camp and how many actual days/weeks the camp is open during this period. Camp revenue should cover all costs incurred.

The only requirement that the Conservancy has placed on Regional Parks is that a significant number of camp attendees be children, from San Bernardino County socio-economically disadvantaged families and that these children not be charged to attend the facility. However, Regional Parks will require that all attendees make reservations through County programs and/or organizations providing youth programs. These organizations will cover the costs associated with attendance at camp for qualified participants.

The Regional Parks Division will prepare a report, by November 15, 2003, summarizing the results of the 2003 summer season, projecting annual costs and revenues, estimating staffing requirements, and include recommendations for the future operation of the camp. If a decision is made to operate the camp after summer 2003, it is anticipated that included in the agreement with The Wildlands Conservancy, the County of San Bernardino would have the option of assuming land ownership of the camp.

Approval of Recommendation #1 approves the concept of Regional Parks operating Camp Bluff Lake and allows staff to proceed in this direction. Approval of Recommendation #2 directs staff to negotiate an agreement with The Wildlands Conservancy for the operation of the camp for the period June 1, 2003 through October 31, 2003. This negotiated agreement will be brought back to the Board for approval. Approval of Recommendation #3 directs staff to prepare a report on the camp operations, and provide recommendations for future operations of the camp, by the County of San Bernardino.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: The proposal has been coordinated with Risk Management for insurance costs. This item has been reviewed by Patricia M. Cole (Administrative Analyst III), County Administrative Office on May 12, 2003.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: The attached proposed budget summarizes the estimated expenses of \$99,444 and revenue of \$105,600. It is anticipated that the camp operating with a shortened season or when fully operational will cover all operating costs. There is no anticipated cost to the County General Fund. A separate enterprise fund (EME CCP CCP) has been established for the accounting of expenses and revenues generated from this program. Any excess revenue will be used against future maintenance of the camp if the County continues to operate the camp.

COST REVIEW SECTION: The County Administrative Office has reviewed this agenda item and concurs with the department's proposal and recommends this action. This recommendation is based on participant fees covering the cost of operating the camp.

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT(S): 3rd District

PRESENTER: Thomas A. Potter, Chief 387-2340